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ABSTRACT

A project geared to adult educators in rural central Pennsylvania addressed the topics of recruitment and retention of students in adult education programs in order to help the educators find solutions to these problems. Seminars conducted twice during 1993 covered the following topics: methods of recruitment, overcoming text anxiety, curbing the dropout rate, and effective communication techniques. A total of 63 teachers from the targeted area attended the workshops, where presenters assisted the adult educators in the following ways: investigating methods to increase enrollment in adult education programs; developing and using techniques to reduce student anxiety; becoming aware of the situations that contribute to the dropout rate in adult education classes and methods to meet the students' needs in order to lower the rate; and increased their ability to communicate effectively with students who display problems in hygiene, substance abuse, and disruptive behavior. Post evaluation forms completed the day of the workshops and follow-up evaluation forms completed 1 month after the workshop was held confirmed teacher comments that the workshops had been helpful and they were using the techniques in their programs. (Appendixes include the workshop evaluation forms and a list of participants.) (KC)

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FINAL REPORT

Catch Them, Calm Them, Keep Them
(Staff Development)

Project Personnel: Carol A. Duff, Project Director
Carol J. Flanigan, Project Teacher

ED 367 886

Fiscal Year: July 1, 1992 - June 30, 1993

Grantee: Central Intermediate Unit #10
Development Center for Adults
Centre County Vocational-Technical School
Pleasant Gap, Pennsylvania 16823
(814) 359-3069

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Funding: $14,530

Project Number: 99-3034

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Title: Staff Development: Catch Them, Calm Them, Keep Them

Address: CIU #10 Development Center for Adults
110 East Bald Eagle Street
Lock Haven, PA 17745

Phone: (717) 893-4038

Director: Carol Duff

Funding: $14,530

Duration of Project:
From: July 1, 1992 To: June 30, 1993 Number of Months: 12

Objectives:

To assist adult educators in increasing enrollment in existing adult education programs throughout rural counties in central Pennsylvania.

To assist adult educators in developing and utilizing techniques which relieve the student anxiety and stress which could lead to failure.

To increase awareness of situations and conditions which contribute to the dropout rate in adult education classes and to improve the retention rate of adult students in programs designed to meet their needs.

To increase adult educators' ability to communicate effectively with students who display problems in hygiene, substance abuse, and behavior.

Description:

This project was geared to adult educators in rural central Pennsylvania and proposed to address the topics of recruitment and retention of students in adult education programs. Interaction with rural adult educators at PDE Fall Workshops and MidWinter Conference underscored the need to address these topics in order to investigate solutions to these problems. Guest lecturers and project staff presented topics via seminar format. The seminars were offered twice in 1993. The four topics were: Methods of Recruitment; Overcoming Test Anxiety; Curbing the Dropout Rate; Effective Communication Techniques.

Target Audience:

Adult educators located in rural counties in central Pennsylvania including Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union counties. The counties listed cover approximately 8,000 square miles of central Pennsylvania. Minimum driving time and distance were primary considerations in determining which counties to include. Space permitting, adult educators from outside the target area were welcome to participate.

Product:

Seminars and a final report.

Methods of Evaluation:

Post evaluation forms completed the day of the workshop and follow-up evaluation forms completed one month after the workshop was held.

Findings:

In depth discussions the day of the workshop and comments made on evaluation forms comfirm the need for improved methods of recruitment and retention of adult learners.

Conclusions:

Adult educators benefit significantly from staff development activities which give them an opportunity to exchange ideas and explore trends in adult education. Improved education comes through improved communication.

INTRODUCTION

Catch Them, Calm Them, Keep Them was designed to address the topics of recruitment and retention of students in adult education programs. Staff development workshops were offered to adult educators in rural central Pennsylvania. Possible solutions to these problems were investigated and ideas were exchanged during the workshops.

Objectives Achieved:

1. Assisted adult educators in investigating methods used to increase enrollment in existing adult education programs throughout rural counties in central Pennsylvania.
2. Assisted adult educators in developing and utilizing techniques which relieve the student anxiety and stress which could lead to failure.
3. Increased the awareness of situations and conditions which contribute to the dropout rate in adult education classes and investigated methods which improve the retention rate of adult students in programs designed to meet their needs.
4. Increased adult educators' ability to communicate effectively with students who display problems in hygiene, substance abuse, and disruptive behavior.

Rationale and Background:

There are many people across the state who could benefit from adult education programs, yet many do not enroll, or they dropout before completion. To do the job effectively, adult educators need to reach and retain the greatest number of adult students possible. Because recruitment and retention are of such importance, adult educators need to share ideas as a means of developing solutions to these problems. Catch Them, Calm Them, Keep Them addressed the topics of recruitment and retention of students in adult education programs in central Pennsylvania by bringing adult educators

together in day long workshops which were offered in January, 1993 and March, 1993. Participants completed evaluation forms at the close of each day's workshop and again one month after the workshop. Sample evaluation forms appear in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Staff and personnel contributing to the project included Project Director Carol A. Duff and Project Teacher Carol J. Flanigan.

Target Audience:

The target audience for this project was adult educators in rural counties in central Pennsylvania including Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union Counties.

The project time frame was as follows:

July - December 1992	Researched topics, selected speakers. Prepared presentation for Topic II. Scheduled speakers, invited educators, made accommodation arrangements.
January 1993	Held first seminar.
February 1993	Sent follow-up evaluation forms to participants.
March 1993	Held second seminar.
April 1993	Sent follow-up evaluation forms to participants.
May - June 1993	Evaluated project and prepared final report.

Copies of this report are on file with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126-0333. Copies of this report may be obtained through AdvancE by calling (800) 992-2283.

CATCH THEM, CALM THEM, KEEP THEM

There are many people across Pennsylvania who could benefit from adult education programs, yet many do not enroll, or drop out before completion. To do the job effectively, adult educators need to reach and retain the greatest number of adult students possible. Because recruitment and retention are of such importance, adult educators need to share ideas as a means of developing solutions to these problems.

This project was designed to address the topics of recruitment and retention of students in adult education programs in central Pennsylvania by bringing adult educators together in a workshop format. The staff development workshops were held on January 22, 1993 and March 19, 1993. The January workshop included only topics I, II, and III because the speaker for topic IV was unable to attend. She had to come from the Johnstown area, and the day provided an untimely ice storm. The March workshop included topics I, III, and IV and was held in the morning only due to low enrollment numbers.

Topic I, entitled Enrollment Enhancers, was presented by Kenneth Boyce and Leroy Adams of the Clinton County Board of Assistance office. They addressed effective networking strategies in a rural setting. In Clinton County, we work closely with the local office of the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to reach prospective students. The DPW requires welfare recipients without high school diplomas to attend G.E.D. classes. As a result, Clinton County has seen marked increased in enrollment in G.E.D. classes. Other enrollment enhancers were also listed and discussed. They included:

1. Public service announcements
2. Flyers, distributed at banks, grocery stores, doctors' offices, libraries, community centers, YMCA
3. Talks given at community groups such as AAUW and Kiwanis
4. Newspaper articles which exhibit human interest success stories

Topic II, entitled Overcoming Anxiety, was presented by Carol Duff,

Project Director and Carol Flanigan, Project Teacher. Both are Central Intermediate Unit #10 Development Center for Adults staff members. They provided participants with anxiety reducing activities and systematic relaxation techniques that can be utilized with students and by students to improve their performance. Anxiety in a specific subject area easily spreads to other subjects and to personal lives. Local G.E.D. teachers have observed that students may perform well on the practice tests but go on to perform poorly on the actual G.E.D. test. Participants felt the most valuable stress and anxiety relieving exercises were the short activities such as the one-minute stress manager, deep breathing techniques, and positive self-talk.

Topic III, entitled Curbing the Dropout Rate was presented by Dr. Allen Quigley, director of Adult Education at the Monroeville Campus of Penn State University. Dr. Quigley defined two kinds of adult learners as resistant and reluctant learners. Resistant learners want to learn and get an education, but they do not want to attend school. Reluctant learners come to school, but they tend to be hostile, shy, skeptical, and distant. Dr. Quigley discussed the following possible reasons why adult students drop out of adult education classes:

1. Difficulty with transportation arrangements.
2. Difficulty with child care arrangements.
3. Problems with personal and family health.
4. Conflicts with the time classes are scheduled.
5. Lack of family support.
6. Fear of failure.

All of these problems have solutions if the students have personal motivation. Without personal motivation, a genuine desire to achieve, each one of the problems listed becomes the reason students use for dropping out. Dr. Quigley's presentation was based on the findings from his recent studies and surveys in the Pittsburgh area.

Topic IV, entitled Dealing With Uncomfortable Classroom Situations, was presented by Barbara Copenhaver, R.N. Many times in adult education, teachers

are faced with students who are substance abusers, display serious behavioral problems, or have hygiene problems which make it difficult for them to be successful in a classroom environment. Adult educators are rarely trained to deal with problems of this nature. As a result, adult educators often find themselves ignoring these problems and hoping they will go away. Mrs. Copenhaver demonstrated effective communication techniques through role playing exercises with the participants. She listed characteristics and changes in behavior which could signal possible substance abuse. She also identified sources of help such as clergy, hospitals, government agencies, and national hotlines.

Evaluation

Most workshop participants considered the topics to be timely and the presenters to be well prepared and interesting. The discussions gave participants valuable information which could be applied in their own classrooms. Post evaluation forms confirmed the immediate implementation of suggestions and techniques discussed. Evaluation forms used at the staff development workshops are included as Appendix A and Appendix B.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Developing successful methods for recruitment and retention of students in adult education programs is a constant challenge. Catch Them, Calm Them, Keep Them was designed to investigate and improve existing practices. Participants successfully achieved this by listening to the presenters and subsequently discussing and sharing specific instances and methods which have proved to be successful for them.

Comments from workshop participants indicate the constant need for staff development projects. Some suggestions for future topics include:

1. Dysfunctional Families - helping students from alcoholic or abusive family environments to overcome their backgrounds and to avoid returning to the same destructive patterns.
2. Teacher Burn-Out - helping adult educators to find the techniques which will be helpful in their personal development to avoid the danger of teacher burn-out.

Staff development workshops continue to be a useful means by which adult educators can come together to discuss problems which arise and to formulate possible solutions. These workshops invariably lead to improvements in programs and in individual teaching styles.

APPENDIX A

CATCH THEM, CALM THEM, KEEP THEM

January 22, 1993

Topic Evaluation

Topic _____

1. Was the speaker well-informed? _____

2. Was the speaker well-prepared? _____

3. Will the information be useful in your programs?

_____

4. Did you learn anything you did not already know?

_____

5. If you were the speaker, what would you have said?

_____

_____

6. Comments and Recommendations

_____

_____

_____

CATCH THEM, CALM THEM, KEEP THEM

JANUARY 22, 1993

Workshop Evaluation

1. Was the pre-workshop paperwork (letters, forms, maps, etc.) clear and easy to understand? _____

2. Were the facilities adequate? (warm, well-lighted, roomy, etc.) _____

3. How were the morning refreshments? _____

_____

4. Did the actual presentation of the topics live up to your expectations based on the advance information?_____

_____

6. Do you plan to return in March to investigate the two remaining topics? _____

7. Comments and recommendations

_____

_____

CATCH THEM, CALM THEM, KEEP THEM

POST EVALUATION

1. What was the title of the workshop(s) in which you participated?

2. What information or techniques have you already incorporated in your classes?

3. What techniques do you plan to use in the future?

4. What suggestions could you make to help us improve the workshop in March?

APPENDIX B

CATCH THEM, CALM THEM, KEEP THEM

March 19, 1993

Topic Evaluation

Topic_____

1. Was the speaker well-informed? _____

2. Was the speaker well-prepared?_____

3. Will the information be useful to you in your current programs?_____

4. Did you learn anything you did not already know?

_____

5. If you were the speaker, what would you have said?

_____

_____

6. Comments and recommendations

_____

_____

_____

CATCH THEM, CALM THEM, KEEP THEM

March 19, 1993

Workshop Evaluation

1. Was the pre-workshop paperwork (letters, forms, maps, etc.) clear and easy to understand? _____

2. Were the facilities adequate? (warm, well-lighted, roomy)

_____

3. How were the morning refreshments?_____

_____

4. Did the actual presentation of the topics live up to your expectations based on the advance information?_____

_____

5. Comments and recommendations

_____

_____

CATCH THEM, CALM THEM, KEEP THEM

POST EVALUATION

1. What was the title of the workshop in which you participated?

2. What information or techniques have you already incorporated in your classes?

3. What techniques do you plan to use in the future?

4. What suggestions could you make to help us improve future staff development workshops?

5. Comments

APPENDIX C

Attendance Record - Catch Them Calm Them Keep Them
January 22, 1993

Williamsport School of Commerce:

Benjamin Comfort
Jim Trick
Larry Manikowski
Lynne Maietta
Mary Weaver
Sharon Heiser
Jodi Leeser

Centre County DCA:

Peggy Keating-Butler
Donna Hyman
Barbara Rivers

Even Start:
Gail Mason
Nancy Wilson

Clearfield County DCA:

Carolyn Grecco
Mary Miller
Jeanne London
Cindy Golemboski
Judy Davis
Suzanne Webster

Even Start:
Kerry Solak

Tuscarora IU:

Janet Storm
Helen Guisler

Lycoming County Literacy Project:

Tina Lorson

Central Susquehanna IU:

Elena Ryder
Donna Kichner
Helen Williams
Sally Wheaton

State College Area School District Community Education:

Margaret Welliver
Karen Lesch

Clinton County DCA:

Linda Hinman
Robin Long
KayLynn Hamilton
Donald Mansfield
Billie Jo Jeirles
Trish Reynolds
Karen Wolfe
Isabella Harman
Cheryl Chitwood
April Falls
Carol Flanigan
Carol Duff

Even Start:
Rose Hibbler
Annette Strouse-Salisbury

Attendance Record - Catch Them, Calm Them, Keep Them
March 19, 1993

Williamsport Y.W.C.A. - Adult Education:

Donna Fenstermacher
Martha Callahan
Kathy O'Brien
Martha Hunter

State College Area School District Community Education:

Vickie McIntyre
Patt Campolongo

Centre County DCA:

Gail Leightley

Penn State University:

Barbara Van Horn
Margaret Mohl

Clinton County DCA:

Deb Burrows
Linda Hinman
Robin Long
KayLynn Hamilton
Billie Jo Jeirles
Trish Reynolds
Karen Wolfe
Cheryl Chitwood
April Falls
Carol Flanigan
Carol Duff

Even Start:

Rose Hibbler
Annette Strouse-Salisbury